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A  
DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the much lamented DEATH  
OF THE

Rev. EDWARD WIGGLESWORTH, D.D.

HOLLIS Professor of Divinity in HARVARD  
College, Cambridge;

Who departed this Life, January 16. 1765.  
In the 73d Year of his Age.

Having faithfully and laudably discharged the Office of  
PROFESSOR, for more than 42 Years.

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By *NATHANIEL APPLETON*, A.M.  
Pastor of the first Church in CAMBRIDGE.

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Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and  
understanding,—and shewing of hard sentences, and  
dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel.  
—And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness  
of the firmament. The Prophet DANIEL.

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BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:

Printed by RICHARD and SAMUEL DRAPER,  
and THOMAS and JOHN FLEET, 1765.

# DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the recent fatal death

of the Rev. Henry Widdowson, D.D.

Minister of the Gospel in Haverhill,  
Cambridge.

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10. 23

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BY THE REV. J. A. ALLEN, A.M.

Author of "The Christian's Duty," &c.

and knowledge, and  
the Christian's duty,  
in the same manner,  
as the same duty,  
as the same duty,  
as the same duty,





A

# Funeral SERMON

ON THE

Rev. Dr. WIGGLESWORTH.



2 CORINTHIANS, VIII. 18.

—*The Brother, whose Praise is in the Gospel, throughout all the Churches.*

**A**S we are not told who this brother was that the apostle sent with Titus on a special occasion to Corinth; so there can be only conjecture about the matter. Several names are mentioned, such as *Barnabas*, that son of consolation, and *Silas*, and *Apollos*, and *Mark*; and especially *Luke*, who wrote the gospel which goes by his name, upon the account of which gospel he became famous in all the churches. The extraordinary character here given of this brother might be as descriptive of him, and as clearly point him out at that day, as if he had been expressly mentioned by

by name. But it is not material, nor to our present purpose, to know who he was : For all that we have to do is with the short, but high commendation which is given of him.

AND here we may observe first of all that he is stiled *a brother* ; by which is understood not merely a christian brother, a believer, and brother in Christ : But a brother and companion in the gospel ministry ; *a fellow worker unto the kingdom of God* : Equally engaged and concerned with the other ministers, in establishing and promoting the gospel.

IN the next place, we may observe the commendation that is given of this brother minister.—— He was *had in praise* and high commendation.—— There were excellent accomplishments, and amiable qualities in him, which shone forth so conspicuously, that he was highly esteemed and greatly respected. We may suppose he was in high reputation for his eminent gifts of knowledge, wisdom, faith, zeal, and steadfastness, with which he was endowed by the spirit of God.

FURTHER, let us consider the *extensiveness* of this high esteem and reputation he was in.—Whose praise is throughout *all the churches*. Which is to be understood not only of the members ; but of the ministers of the churches. His gifts and accomplishments were so superiour and extensive, that they were not confined to any particular church, or to any private and retired corner of the vineyard, where



where his gifts and graces would be out of general view, and very much buried in obscurity : But God so ordered it that his rare accomplishments should be publickly known and acknowledged. We may suppose his preaching, his writings, and other ministerial services, rendered him very famous even in all the churches. Very likely he was well known to the apostles, and other ministers of Christ in general, who discerned the excellent qualities he was endowed with ; and gave forth such high commendations of him, as spread his fame through all the churches ; so that they were all filled with the high praises of him.

AGAIN, let us consider the particular point for which he was more especially had in such high reputation : And that was with reference to the *gospel*. *Whose praise is in the GOSPEL* ; or for the *gospel*. Whatever his knowledge and accomplishments were as to other things ; yet it was for his knowledge of Christ, and of the great things of the *gospel*, that he became so famous in the churches. He was well instructed, and, we may suppose, eminent for his knowledge, in the things of God and the distinguishing points of christianity. And if this brother was *Luke* the evangelist (which was the prevailing opinion of the ancients) he was eminently instructed in the *gospel* history ; and so in the doctrines and principles of christianity. We may well suppose him to be mighty in the scriptures, and that he, like the great apostle Paul, *reasoned* with the people out of the holy scriptures, opening  
and



and alleging that Jesus was the Christ. Acts xvii. 2, 3. His discourses on those points were highly esteemed; and great weight was laid on his judgment in difficult points of the gospel, in matters of controversy, or of doubtful disputation.

BUT then we may conclude further, that his praise in the gospel, throughout all the churches, was for the known stedfastness of his faith, and the uniformity of his temper and behaviour with this gospel he professed, preached up, and recommended to others. His knowledge and faith, his temper and manner of life, were all of a piece, and according to the gospel: Without which we cannot suppose that his praise would have been in all the churches.

LASTLY, I would observe the emphatic article that is here affixed to this brother. *The* brother. It is not said we have sent with Titus *a* brother, but *the* brother, by way of distinction, and eminency above the other brethren in the ministry: And as one peculiarly fitted for the service upon which he was sent. He was pitched upon as *the* brother, the very man above all the rest to be employed in the service he was sent upon. No man like minded, no man so eminently fitted for the business he was employed in.

AFTER such a large opening the text (by which the suitableness thereof to the present dispensation of Divine Providence may very obviously appear to every one) I proceed for the further illustration of the subject to consider, ist,

- 1<sup>st</sup>, *Some of those gospel qualifications which deservedly intitle a man to universal praise; to the praise of all the churches.*
- 2<sup>dly</sup>, *To set forth what a distinguishing favour and blessed attainment it is, to be justly intitled to universal praise.*
- 3<sup>dly</sup>, *Make some proper improvement, suited to the solemn and sorrowful occasion that leads us to these meditations.*

I. LET us consider some of *those gospel qualifications, which deservedly intitle a man to universal praise; the praise of all the churches.*

AND here I will begin with

- 1<sup>st</sup>. *Extensive knowledge in the great things of the gospel.*

KNOWLEDGE is an essential article in a great and good man. *For the soul to be without knowledge, it is not good.\** And there is no knowledge so sublime, so enlarging, and enobling to the soul, as the knowledge of God, and the things of God; the knowledge of Christ, and the way to salvation by him: *And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.†* The learned and great apostle Paul, who must be allowed to be a good judge of knowledge and

B learning,

\* Prov. XIX. 2.      † John XVII. 3.



learning, as to the excellency and usefulness of it, declares that he counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.\* In the christian scheme of salvation, which is contained in the holy scriptures, are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge; consequently it must needs be a very laudable attainment, to have a good and thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures, those oracles of divine truth: To be able not only to recite the words of the holy scriptures; but to see and understand the meaning of the same. It is very praise-worthy to be able so to search the scriptures, as to compare translations with the original; and to compare spiritual things with spiritual; one portion of scripture with another; so as, instead of being carried away with the sound of words, to gain the true sense and meaning of the several places; and thereby to gain a clear and comprehensive view of the gospel scheme of salvation; and so of the various truths and duties therein contained.

MOREOVER, this knowledge of the gospel that is truly laudable, and would recommend to public esteem, is a good acquaintance with the various senses that have been put upon places of holy scripture; and so the various sentiments, systems and principles of christianity, that have or do prevail in the world, whereby they may be able to put a mark upon dangerous errors, which have been broached by ignorant men, who have wrested the holy scriptures; and to point out the truth as it is in Jesus.

FURTHERMORE,

\* Phil. III. 8.



FURTHERMORE, another very laudable point of knowledge in the things of God, is to understand the ground and foundation of our holy religion; and to get acquainted so far both with the internal and external evidence of the divine authority of the holy scriptures, and so of the truth of christianity, as to be able to convince gainayers, and to vindicate the glorious truths of the gospel from the captious cavils, or mere subtle objections started by *men of corrupt minds, given to perverse disputings, and destitute of the truth*: And to be able to set in a strong and convincing light, the arguments to prove the holy scriptures to be given by inspiration of God; and consequently that the gospel scheme of salvation is built upon a sure foundation, upon which we may safely venture our souls and the eternal concerns of them.

Now, such an extensive knowledge of the gospel, and so of the foundations of our holy religion, is such a necessary and excellent attainment, that those who make a laudable proficiency herein, merit highly of the church of God. Such men have been in one age and another the pillars of the church; the external props by which the church has been kept from sinking into utter ignorance and infidelity.

2dly. *Soundness of principles; adhering closely to the gospel, without adding thereto, or diminishing, or varying therefrom, is very praise-worthy.*

FOR, altho' orthodoxy, or soundness of principles, may be an uncertain phrase, inasmuch as the various sects that are in the world, lay claim to this character; yet, as christians of all denominations profess the gospel to be the only sure and unerring rule of faith and manners; so those principles must be soundest, which come the nearest to the standard. Consequently, those persons who not only professedly, but really endeavour to square their faith and practice by the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, are to be had in honour. And where this evidently appears to be the care and endeavour of any persons, so as neither to preach, publish or vent any thing as a necessary article of faith, but what is plainly demonstrated by the word of God; it must needs recommend them to the church of God, which is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.\* And therefore those teachers who have so much knowledge, wisdom and humility, as not to be wise above what is written, and make this their constant inquiry, in all their searches after divine truths, *what saith the scripture?* and whenever they speak in a way of teaching, speak as the oracles of God; and appeal to those written sacred oracles, according to the true genuine meaning of the same, for the truth of what they assert, are highly to be commended, and deserve the praises of all the churches of Christ: Which will appear by considering the dreadful errors, superstitions, corruptions, and idolatries, the church fell into, when they departed from this  
only

\* Eph. II. 20.



only unerring rule, and set up an infallible head on earth; and taught for doctrines the traditions and commandments of men.

AND how well did those glorious worthies deserve of the church of Christ, who boldly and courageously began a reformation, and strenuously endeavoured to reduce the church to its original foundation, the holy scriptures? And how justly are the names of those first reformers handed down with honour throughout all the protestant churches in the world? But, inasmuch as even the reformed churches have not gotten so compleatly upon the original basis as is to be desired; it must needs be very praise-worthy for those who are set up to be teachers of others, to labour to fix them more and more upon the gospel foundation, without the particular schemes, systems, or inventions of men; or indeed so much as the expressions of men in such grand mysterious points, wherein *we know not how to order our speech by reason of darknes.*

3dly. *The gift of opening the holy scriptures; setting forth the truths and duties contained therein, in a true, distinct and clear light,* is what recommends teachers to the churches of the Lord Jesus.

THIS implies a capacious mind, a clear head, extensive knowledge, distinct ideas, and reach of thought, obtained, or improved, by much reading and study, a careful weighing matters, and laying them together. And surely such natural endowments,



ments, improved by close application to meditation and reading, justly claim the high esteem of the churches of Christ. And such will be respected and honoured by all the lovers of truth, and the diligent sincere inquirers after it. How are persons instructed, and greatly edified, who set at the feet of such learned doctors whose ideas lie clear and distinct; and what benefit have the written labours of such men been to the christian world? And how have their learned expositions, wherein they have unfolded the holy scriptures, and their other ingenious and judicious discourses, brought and preserved light and knowledge in the church? And how have the names and memories of such learned authors been handed down and spread abroad in the christian church, with high honour and esteem?

4thly. **THE** gift of confirming divine truths and enforcing duties, in a strong, convincing and moving manner, justly claims the praises of all christians.

**THIS** is a gift as useful and necessary, in its place, as the former, for the church of Christ. It is not sufficient to set truths and duties before persons, merely to enlighten their understandings, and enlarge their minds; but, as all divine truths have reference to practice, to which there is a natural backwardness, and great opposition, from the world, the things of the world, the corrupt customs of the world, the enticements and the examples of sinners;

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so there needs warm addressees to the conscience, to the passions and affections of the soul, yea to all the springs of action. People need, not only to be told their duty, and shown what it is; but to be urged to it, and in a moving manner be expostulated with about it. Consequently, the compleat preacher, or teacher, will have his easy, clear and plain instructions warm'd and animated, as if his tongue had been just touched with *a live coal from off the altar*. His writings will be pungent, as well as clear and pertinent; and all the great arguments of the gospel for a christian temper and practice, will be set in such array, as may serve not only to excite and engage the attention, but to rouse the conscience, to enkindle the affections; yea, and with the concurring influence of the divine spirit, to persuade the will, and convert the man. And Oh! how much is the church of God obliged to such awakening preachers; and for such practical and pathetic writings of theirs which are extant, and lodged in christian families! And what a multitude of precious saints will rise up at the judgment and call such preachers and authors blessed, for the blessed effects of their faithful labours upon their souls? And with what respect and affection are such faithful servants of Christ spoken of among the people of God, and how are their practical writings recommended, spread, and handed down from one generation to another?

5thly. A special gift of *discerning of spirits*; accurately distinguishing between *truth* and *error*;



*error ; between greater and lesser matters of christianity ; between things clear and plain, and those that are doubtful ; between essentials and circumstantials in religion.*

THIS is a most useful and even necessary gift for preachers and teachers of the gospel ; and the want of it has caused the greatest disturbances and confusions in the church. Truth and error, altho' essentially different from each other, yet oftentimes put on such similar appearances, that it requires a sharp and penetrating eye to discern the difference, so as to distinguish the truth from the error. Error is oftentimes gilded over with such specious and plausible arguments, and communicated in such artful and equivocal terms, that ministers, as well as others, have swallowed them down as truths ; and only some singular gift of discerning has been able to discover the error, and the danger thereof that was couched therein.

BUT then again, what severe contests have there been among the churches of Christ ; and how have they been thrown into feuds and quarrels ? How have they lost their charity one for another ? How have they separated and withdrawn communion from each other ? Yea, how have they in their turns persecuted one another even unto death ? And all this for want of discerning between the greater and the lesser matters of the gospel, the essentials and only circumstantials of religion ! But now, when God endows any of his servants with  
an



an eminent spirit of discerning in these matters, so as to see what *faith* that is which was once delivered to the saints, to be contended for; and what are matters of less importance, and not worth contending about; what matter is this of thanksgiving to God? and how highly do such deserve of all the churches, who give them to see that the matters in which they differ are not worth striving or breaking charity about; and who are instrumental of persuading christians, notwithstanding the little differences in opinion and practice, to maintain charity and communion one with another? How deservedly are they in the praise of all the churches within their knowledge and influence, who are able in any measure, with the wisdom and discerning of the apostle Paul, to conciliate them in matters of difference about lesser things, as he did, Rom. xiv. about eating, or not eating certain meats, or observing, and not observing certain days; concerning which he advises not to judge nor to despise one another; but, being fully persuaded in their own minds, he would have them charitably to believe as to each other, that they did what they thought most pleasing to Christ. *He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for he giveth God thanks: He that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

6thly, Zeal for the great truths and duties of christianity; but duly tempered with charity and prudence, challenges high honour and respect from the churches of Christ.

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ALTHOUGH

ALTHOUGH there is a blind furious zeal about matters comparatively small, which is to be dreaded ; yet there is a zeal that is truly laudable. *It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.\** And Christ purifies to himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works.†* How commendable must it be for teachers and preachers, who are set for the defence of the gospel, to appear zealous, bold and courageous for the truth, so as to defend it against all the daring attempts of deists and infidels, and such like vile opposers of christianity ? Surely the church of God is greatly indebted to those christian heroes, who instead of being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, or afraid to appear in his cause, have openly professed him before persecuting kings and emperors, and have sacrificed their very lives in the cause ; and submitted to the most cruel tortures that men or devils could invent, rather than renounce the christian cause ? These glorious martyrs are deservedly had in praise throughout all the churches ; and their names had in everlasting remembrance, whose zeal and courage conquered the heathen rage, and caused the gospel so to spread, that it became a general observation that *the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.*

AND as to those who have not been called to resist unto blood ; but yet have had a zeal to appear openly in the defence of christianity, and of any of its important truths and duties, they deserve very highly of the church : For if it had not been for such  
zealous

\* Gal. IV. 18.

† Tit. II. 14.



zealous and careful watchmen upon the walls, to give faithful and seasonable warning, the church would have been robbed of one important truth and duty of christianity after another, till it would have been stripped of every thing that is purely christian, and carried back to the religion of the heathen, or something worse.

BUT then, a zeal that is truly commendable will not be severe and cruel, though it should have power in its hand; but is regulated by charity and goodness. It is not a zeal that rashly thinketh or speaketh evil of others; but being qualified with love and charity, don't allow itself to think any evil, without sufficient foundation for it; but hopeth all things, and believeth all things it possibly can, upon any good foundation, in favour of them; ready to put as favourable constructions upon their sentiments and ways as they will possibly bear. This zeal is also directed by wisdom and prudence, carefully avoiding all rashness and precipitancy, and every thing that is fierce and cruel, which fiery zeal prompts to; but wisely considers the persons with whom it has to do, and the times and circumstances of things.—And now how much are the churches indebted to such who though zealous for God and his cause, are candid and charitable, prudent and cautious in all their measures? And how are uproars in towns and churches stilled, party rage and fury allayed, and all things brought to peace and kept in it, by the happy influence of such a temper?

7thly. *Stedfastness in the truths and ways of God is highly commendable.*

By which I mean not a rigid fixedness or inflexibility against arguments sufficient to change our minds; for this would be obstinacy and perverseness, rather than a rational or gracious stedfastness; which stedfastness is opposite to that fickleness of temper, and wavering disposition, that keeps men so loose and unhinged, that they hardly know their own minds, much less may others depend upon them.

Now such unstable souls, liable as the weathercock to be turned by the wind, and so to be like children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, very much disparage their character. *Unstable as water, they shall not excell.\**

WHEREAS the stedfast man is he, who having examined the ground of his faith and practice, and finding himself upon a good foundation, remains fixed and steady. He is not suddenly moved by sophistical and subtle arguments, or plausible appearances of things; but will examine and observe things carefully; and not change his mind or conduct, till upon a careful and thorough weighing of the matter, he finds it reasonable.

AND surely it must be highly to the commendation of such as are appointed the guides and instructors of others, that they be firm and steady in their principles, and able to defend them. And these

\* Gen. XLV. 4.



these churches are greatly indebted to such steady and faithful guides, to whom, under God, it is very much owing that they have hitherto been preserved upon their foundation; when they have been so vehemently assaulted by ignorant and illiterate intruders, who have thrown many of the churches into confusion, and threatned their overthrow. If it had not been for a number of steady christians, ministers and spiritual guides (of whom the late deceased among us was an eminent one) these churches would have been much shaken, if not overthrown; therefore such justly claim a praise thro' all the churches.

8thly. *I may add that diligence, constancy and activity are very recommending qualities.*

THESE added to the forementioned qualities, render a man very illustrious, and spread his name and fame throughout the churches, far and near. It was by the diligence, the activity, and the abundant labours of some upon sacred, and others upon ecclesiastical record, that they have rendered themselves famous in all ages of the church, even to this day.—But I may not enlarge. Therefore,

9thly. *Sincerely aiming to honour God with all his gifts, and carefully endeavouring to exemplify all the graces and virtues of the christian in his own life, must needs recommend to the praise of all the churches who shall see and hear of the same.*

THIS

THIS is the crowning point of any great man's character. It is THIS that makes the man's face to shine. It is THIS that puts a lustre upon all the rich endowments of nature, or of education. It is THIS that adorns the man in every office, in every station and relation of life. It is THIS that puts a gloss, yea a real beauty and excellency upon all performances. Then it is that ministers and other doctors of divinity recommend their discourses, and set forth the beauty and excellency of divine truths, and give a certain force and energy to them, viz. when they exemplify their doctrines and their counsels in their own temper and carriage. When ministers and spiritual guides live as the gospel teaches them, and as they teach others from the gospel, even *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly*, in the world: Then, I say, they do in an eminent manner adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. THIS *will cause their lights to shine before men; and others seeing and hearing of their good works; of their exemplary piety, holiness and goodness, will not only have them in great reputation and honour, but will be induced to be followers of them; and from their bright example to glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

II. LET us now proceed to consider what a *distinguishing favour and blessed attainment it is, to have such endowments, natural or acquired, and such a gracious temper and behaviour, as justly to claim the praises of all the churches.*

It



IT is an high commendation which is here given of this brother minister in the text, *That his praise in the gospel was throughout all the churches*, intimating hereby that there was something uncommon in him; and that God had enabled him, in a very distinguishing manner, to recommend himself to the high esteem and praise of all the churches; which supposes the forementioned, and such like accomplishments, in an eminent degree, were found in him. *His praise in all the churches*, is not to be understood as if he was only a very popular man, who by voice and gesture, and flow of words, gained the vulgar popular applause; but that he had such real excellencies and accomplishments as recommended him to the apostles and ministers, and to all the wise and understanding and judicious among them; who were able to discern the things that differ.

AND that it is a distinguishing favour and blessed attainment to have such endowments of mind, and such other good qualities, as justly recommend to the high esteem of all wise and good men, will appear, if we briefly consider a few things.

1st. *That they are only great and good qualities which will recommend to the esteem and respect of wise, great and good men.*

THE illiterate vulgar and weak people may be carried away with noise and show, and some little popular arts, without any thing substantially good and excellent. The brother in our text was  
not

not such an one : But his qualifications were such as recommended him to the wise and the best judges of true worth : Consequently, there must have been excellent endowments and superiour qualities found in him, to recommend to universal esteem.—And now it must needs be a great favour and special blessing, to be so richly endowed as to gain, and that very deservedly, an universal esteem. Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. He is the former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits; and he forms and unites them together in a manner we know not how; from whence arise the various capacities, geniuses and inclinations among the children of men. And he who has the disposing of all things in providence, orders out the various advantages, and gives the various inclinations to improve the same, for the enlarging the mind, and enriching it with a greater variety of useful knowledge. And whenever their natural powers and acquired knowledge are sanctified, and converted to the greatest and best purposes, it is by the grace of God. And therefore when there are such distinguishing endowments of nature, providence, and grace, found in any, as give them a distinguishing esteem among the wise and good, it must be looked upon as a distinguishing favour to such, and should be acknowledged by them and their friends to the glory of God. For what have any which may claim distinguishing esteem, but what they have received? and therefore, whilst such receive honour and praise of men, they should give the glory to God.

2dly.



2dly. *It is a rare thing to have these good qualities so united in the same subject, and in so conspicuous a manner as to gain universal esteem and reputation.*

THOSE good qualities which deserve commendation and praise, are for the most part dispersed among the children of men. To this man is given one eminent gift, to that man is given another. Some have superiour natural powers; but no education to cultivate and enlarge them. Others have good natural powers, and good education; but they have violent passions, suddenly moved and carried to great excess; besides other bad natural tempers. Others again have all these advantages, good capacities, good temper, good education to the great enlargement of their minds; but no grace to sanctify them, and fit them for their master's use; and so they cannot be in that high esteem in the churches, and with the faithful in Christ Jesus. But then again, supposing the man excellent for natural powers and for great improvement of his mind by education, and a good natural temper, and all sanctified by divine grace; yet, alas! how often has the character of such an one been flurred by some sin or folly that he has fallen into? which has been *as the dead fly in the ointment of the apothecary, that sendeth forth a stinking savour, and brings a blot and disgrace upon him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.\**

LASTLY here, There are some excellent persons who upon all accounts deserve and have the high  
D commendations

\* Eccles. X. 1.

commendations of all who are acquainted with them : But they are not much known ; their light is as it were put under a bushel ; their lot is in some remote and retired corner of the vineyard ; and so they live and die pretty much in obscurity. So that, upon the whole, to have persons of such superiour accomplishments, sanctified and adorned by divine grace, free from any blot or blemish in their character, and these placed as a city set upon a hill, to be seen and known of all men, is a very rare thing, and consequently to be taken notice of and acknowledged as a distinguishing favour and blessing.

3dly. *It is a special favour, as it gives to such great advantages for being eminently useful in the world.*

REPUTATION and esteem give a man great advantage for doing good ; and the higher and more extensive his character rises, so much the greater opportunity it gives him of being useful to mankind. The sentiments of such a man will be much regarded ; his judgment will be highly esteemed ; his counsel will be sought after and hearkened unto ; his advice on particular points of difficulty will come with weight ; and his example will be very influential ; and being graciously inclined to do all the good he can, it is not easy to think how extensively useful such a man is to the family, to the town, and to every society with which he is connected ; yea, and to the church of God in general.—And now the more useful God makes



makes us in the world, so much the more favour he shows to us, and so much the more honour he confers upon us.

4thly. *As the man highly and deservedly esteemed implies the faithful and the wise servant ; so he will receive the distinguishing rewards of such.*

WE are speaking of men who are deservedly esteemed and honoured as the faithful servants of Christ ; and as such they will be not only esteemed and praised through the churches of Christ, but they shall have the high approbation of their judge ; and from high esteem among the saints on earth, shall be received to glory, honour and immortality in heaven ; and by how much they have distinguished themselves, according to their abilities and opportunities, in the service of God, for the honour of Christ and the good of men, so much the greater will be their reward in heaven ; and so much more open and abundant entrance shall be ministred to them into the everlasting kingdom. All which serves to show what a special favour it is to have superiour abilities, so sanctified and faithfully improved, as shall be not only with reputation and honour in the church of God ; but with the approbation of our judge. For this is the way to have that blessed *euge* full of honour, comfort and happiness pronounced upon us : *Well done good and faithful servant — enter into the joy of thy Lord.\**

D 2

LET

\* Matt. XXV. 21.

LET us now proceed to make some *improvement* and *application* of these meditations.

1st. WE learn from what has been said that *God is thankfully to be acknowledged by all whom he largely endows with such gifts and graces, as deservedly give them great esteem and an high character in the church of God.*

THE gifts of nature, even all the powers of the mind, with the natural genius, disposition and temper; and all the advantages for improvement and enlargement; and all that virtuous and gracious turn of mind, with good behaviour; and all the laudable actions and performances, whereby persons recommend themselves to the high esteem of others, are from God even from the very first to the last: And that very honour and esteem that arises from hence comes of him; and is a favour of divine providence thankfully to be acknowledged to God's glory, and improved to his honour.

GOD's giving a man high esteem and reputation, gives him great advantages of doing much for the honour of God and the good of mankind: And in this way he is to express his thankfulness to God for any such distinguishing favour. The sentiments, the principles, the counsels, the admonitions, the examples of such will be weighty and influential, in proportion to the character they bear, and the esteem and honour they are had in, among mankind. Surely then it concerns such to show their thankfulness



fulness to God for his distinguishing favours to them; by being so much the more careful in all their sayings, and in all their writings they send forth into the world: And so much the more circumspect in all their conduct, because the eyes of people naturally fix upon them: Nothing is more common than for persons to defend themselves in that which is ill, and unguarded, and so cannot otherwise be excused; by saying it is no more than such and such who bear the best of characters have said or done. Consequently such men whom God favours with high reputation and character, cannot better show their gratitude to him for the same, than by a most guarded, circumspect, exemplary conversation, diligently employing their gifts, and improving their interest in men's hearts for the honour of God, the increase of religion, and so the best good of mankind.

2dly. THE subject before us teaches us *That it is but a laudable ambition, to endeavour justly to deserve a universal good character.*

THE apostle speaks of it as a high commendation of the brother in our text, *that he was had in praise throughout all the churches*, and consequently it was to his honour, that he laboured so to acquit himself as to merit such universal praise.

THE love of fame or praise is a natural passion formed in man to serve some great and good purposes, and to prompt men to labour to excell in things

things great and good : And this passion under due regulation serves as a noble and powerful spur to great and good, but difficult and dangerous enterprises. But this as well as the other useful passions of the soul is degenerated and corrupted, and so is apt to run into extremes.

WITH some this laudable ambition degenerates into *sordid meanness*, and a *criminal disregard of character* ; they are careless what men say or think of them ; and are so negligent of the good opinion of others, that they will do nothing to deserve their good esteem ; and set so light by a good name (though it be better than great riches) that they will sacrifice it, and expose themselves to the contempt of all wise and good men, for the sake of gratifying some filthy and brutish lust.

THE other extreme is, when this laudable ambition degenerates into *pride* : Some men are more concerned to have praise and honour than to deserve it ; and indulge such an excessive love of fame as to take unjustifiable methods for the gaining it. Instead of observing the wise man's rule,\* *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ; a stranger, and not thine own lips*, they will praise themselves ; and will do every thing in an ostentatious vain-glorious manner, that they may have praise and glory of men ; to the neglect of such duties and services as are out of the sight of men ; they aim only at the appearance and not the reality of goodness ; and will vilify others to exalt themselves, and secretly wound other mens characters to advance their own.

BUT

\* Prov. XXVII. 2.



BUT now happy is the man, who has wisdom and grace to steer between these two extremes; who has a due regard to character, but endeavours to deserve it, as well as have it; who desires and seeks no further praise or commendation than he has just claim to; and who endeavours to acquit himself faithfully in every office and relation of life he sustains, and leaves it with God to give or with-hold the praise.

3dly. *What a great blessing to a people, thankfully to be acknowledged, when God raises up persons, and qualifies them after such a manner as to deserve the praises and high commendations of all the churches; even of all wise, serious and good men.*

THESE are indeed the *excellent ones in the earth*. They are the *salt of the earth*. These are the *light of the world*. They are the *pillars of the churches, and the glory of Christ*; and the means of preserving the churches from sinking into ignorance and degenerating into corruption. It is by such men's being raised up in one age of the church, and another, that the truths and principles of christianity, according to the scriptures, have been preserved, and even rescued and separated from the dregs of ignorance and corruption, which the church in some former ages was sunk into; and the truth as it is in Jesus, and in his gospel, made to shine forth, with such a degree of clearness as  
now

now it does. Surely the churches of God are greatly indebted to such able and faithful men. But O! what obligations are christians under to God, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has, from time to time, raised up such men, and enriched them with such excellent gifts! Surely it becomes christians to be thankful for the gifts bestowed upon others, as well as upon themselves: For superiour gifts bestowed upon any persons are for the public good; and therefore we should all rejoice in them, and be thankful for them.

4thly. *CONSEQUENTLY, the death and departure of persons of distinguishing worth and character ought to be taken notice of as a public loss, and the hearts of people duely affected therewith.*

As for those whose praise is in all the churches, when God takes them away by death, it becomes churches to be humble under his holy hand; and I believe you will every one agree that God is calling us at this time to take a solemn and humble notice of such a dispensation of his holy providence the last week, in the death and departure of the *Rev. Dr. WIGGLESWORTH, Hollis Professor of Divinity in the College*, whose remains were interred the last evening. The just claim he had to the high commendation and character in my text, led me to the subject; he being a reverend brother, whose praise in the gospel is deservedly had throughout the churches; yea, we may apply the



the character of *Demetrius* unto him, of whom it is said, *That he hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself.\**

THE great former of all things, who designed him for a very important station of life, relating to his gospel kingdom, formed him originally with many very superiour powers of the mind, distinguishingly fitted for such a service. Altho' God gave him but a slender constitution of body, yet he was very liberal to him in the various faculties of his soul, which perhaps were promoted and brought forth to greater advantage by the tenderness and delicacy of his bodily frame. So that in his very make and constitution there was such an extensiveness and reach of thought, such a quickness and clearness of apprehension, such a soundness of judgment, such an acuteness and strength of reasoning, such accuracy of expression; and all these accompanied with such a calm, sedate and dispassionate temper as are rarely to be met with in the same subject.

HAVING had the advantage of a liberal education, he enlarged and stored his mind with treasures of useful knowledge. And as he purposed, by the will of God, to employ his life in the gospel ministry, so divinity, and the things of the gospel, and those which would serve to illustrate and confirm the same, were the subjects that he chiefly employed his mind in the study of. And altho' he stood candidate for the gospel ministry, and went on in occasional preaching for some years;

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\* III. Ep. John 12 ver.

in which he gave to all, but especially to the more learned and judicious, very ample tokens of his superiour abilities and thorough acquaintance with sacred things; yet it appeared in a little time, by the course of providence, that God had another and very important business in reserve for him: Namely, that instead of being confined to teach and minister to one single congregation of common christians, he should be an instructor of all the young candidates for the gospel ministry, and train them up in the great doctrines and principles of christianity; and so form and fit them to go forth into the several congregations of the Lord, and preach the pure truths of the gospel to them; and so to have it as his special business, to teach those who were to be teachers and preachers to others.

To bring about this important event, behold! at that very time, God raised up a most generous benefactor to the college, viz. the late worthy Mr. THOMAS HOLLIS, merchant, of London; who among his many pious and charitable benefactions to the college, founded a professorship for divinity; making the same known to the corporation, desiring them to name some person to him proper for that service. Accordingly, the distinguishing abilities of Mr. Wigglesworth were so conspicuous, that he was unanimously nominated and appointed to that office; in which he has, thro' the great goodness of God, very laudably, yea with distinguishing honour, officiated for more than forty two years; and so has abundantly answered the high commendatory character given  
of



of him by one of the corporation, and in their name, to his worthy patron. \*

AND by such a faithful and acceptable discharge of this office it is more especially that his praise comes to be in all the churches : For, altho' his occasional preaching and his printed works have spread his fame; yet it was by the constant attendance upon the duties of his office, that his praise has been diffused thro'

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these

- \* " There is but one thing more, Sir, which I have now to add, but it is a very great one ; the nomination of a person to you, to be your first professor. There is lately returned to, and is now residing in the college, a very accomplished person for the office, in our joint opinion and judgment, Mr. *Edward Wigglesworth*, who in the year 1710 passed his first degree with us, and has ever since diligently applied himself to the learned studies, and to the study of divinity more especially. He is a person of known and exemplary virtue, piety, literature, modesty, meekness, and other christian ornaments. His public exercises in the pulpit discover a solid judgment, a clean stile, a clear method, a bright and strong thought, and a facility or aptness to teach : And it now appears to us as if Providence may have reserved him for such a service as this now before us ; which we apprehend may suit him in all respects, excepting his low opinion of himself ; yet neither is he wanting in gravity, wisdom, and a spirit of government and authority, which may be necessary to command the reverence of others to him, in any office he may be called to."

*Vid. Life and Character of Dr. Colman, p. 54, 55.*

Besides the professorship of divinity, the above named Mr. *Hollis* founded a professorship of mathematicks, of natural and experimental philosophy; established ten scholarships; furnished the college with a costly and valuable apparatus; and some or other of that worthy name and family

these churches : For he being continued, by the great goodness of God, in the professor's chair for so many years, most by far of the ministers of this and of some neighbouring provinces, have been trained up in their theological studies by and under him ; who, I doubt not, do with one consent agree to do him honour, as he who by his public and private lectures, and personal conferences, has given great light to them in the things of the gospel ; and done a great deal to establish them in many important points of christianity. So in this way his eminent gifts became of public use, and are as it were, by their ministry, transmitted to the several churches of the land. And I believe his praise is so in these churches, especially with the ministers of them, that they would with one voice declare that they knew not any, who would have more, if so compleatly, filled that chair as he did.

If we consider him in the government of the college, and consulting for its welfare, he was a very

family have, from time to time, for more than forty years past, been testifying their pious and generous regards to the college. And the present worthy Mr. Thomas Hollis, of London, possessed abundantly of the same excellent spirit, and kind regard to the college, which recommended and endeared his great uncle to us, has since the late destruction of the library and apparatus by fire, sent towards the reparation of that loss, a very large collection of valuable books, to the amount of some hundreds sterling.

The Lord be praised for that compassionate, benevolent, and liberal spirit he has stirred up towards the college of late ; And may all its kind and generous benefactors, whether in Great-Britain or amongst ourselves, be abundantly rewarded with the blessings of divine providence and grace.



very useful member, not only considered in his connection with the president and tutors, in the immediate government of the students; but as one of the corporation of the college. For, altho' his hardness of hearing was a great difficulty to him when debates were carried on, yet things being made known to him (to have his thoughts upon them) there always appeared in him such an accuracy of thought, such a wisdom and judiciousness in his observations, as were ever of great weight with us. Which I am able to speak from my own observation, having had the honour and pleasure of sitting with him at that board for more than forty years.

AND such was the esteem the learned had of his knowledge, sagacity, and soundness of judgment, that he was much consulted in doubtful and difficult cases; and we never thought a controversy in better hands than when he was persuaded to undertake it. And altho' he was for defending and supporting the truth, and had an acuteness, whereby he could be keen in exposing the weakness of his opposers; yet christian candour and charity was his shining character; who went great lengths in his charitable opinion of those who were sincere and honest in their differing sentiments from him.

IN his family relations he was very exemplary: He was a tender and careful husband; a wife as well as affectionate father; and a kind master. God visited him with fore afflictions in his family, in many sorrowful deaths, and in fore sicknesses and of long continuance. But during such a series of troubles, God enabled him to exhibit a bright example

ample of patience and humble submission to the will of God; and even so much sedateness and composedness of mind, that any one coming in to discourse with him upon any point, would hardly perceive by him that there was any trouble in his house. And he found it was good to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God: For God has been pleased of late to shift the scene, and restore the voice of health and salvation, in a good measure, to his children; which I doubt not they take notice of with thankfulness; and especially that their tender father lived to see them under such comfortable circumstances before he left the world.

HE was a prudent, peaceable, friendly and kind neighbour; ready to every good work of piety and charity, as the poor and others can testify: And we all are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself thro' the whole course of his life among us.

AND now mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. His death, like his life, was sedate and calm, without any surprize or agitation of spirit. He manifested to me, the day before he expired, "That if God " had any further service for him to do he should " be glad to live: But he was resigned to the will " of God." And when I asked him, whether his faith and hope remained strong and steady? he answered me to this purpose, "He thought he " could say that in some good measure he had " walked before God in truth and with a perfect " heart: And altho' there had been many defects " and



“ and failings in his life, yet he hoped and believed  
“ that thro’ Christ he should be accepted.” And  
so we all believe, and are persuaded concerning him.

AND now what belongs to all of us, but to labour  
to be duly affected with the death of an eminent  
faint, and of such a distinguished character ?

SURELY the college has great reason to lament  
the death of such a worthy, well accomplished and  
faithful professor.

AND all the churches in the land have reason to  
lament the death of him whose praise has been in  
them. And may not only the students who reside  
at college, but all the ministers thro’ the land, who  
have been trained up under him, remember how  
they have received and heard, and hold fast the  
faithful and the good word they have received at  
his mouth. And may we all unite in humble fer-  
vent prayer, that the God of the spirits of all flesh,  
and with whom is the residue of the spirit, would  
raise up and turn the eyes of the governors of the  
college to a successor in all respects fitted for that  
important station.

MAY the children of the deceased be supported  
under such a bereaving dispensation of divine pro-  
vidence ; and may a double portion of that good  
spirit which was in their father, and in their other  
pious ancestors, descend and rest upon them ; and  
may they be very eminent blessings in the several  
stations and services that God assigns to them ; and,  
if it may be the will of God, as great blessings to the  
college as their excellent father has been.


MAY

MAY I myself, and this whole church and congregation, be deeply affected with the extinction of this burning and shining light, whose devout presence has for so many years graced this assembly; and by whose kind labours, instructive, judicious and accurate discourses, we have been often entertained and edified; to think we shall see his face and hear his voice no more.

MAY those of us who have for a long course of years been concerned with the deceased in transacting the various affairs of the college, deeply lay to heart the great breach which by his death is made upon the government of that society: And may God appear in great mercy to be the speedy repairer of the breach.

FINALLY. May we all be quickened by this holy providence to be up and doing; improving our time, and our various talents, to the best advantage, working the works of him who hath sent us, whilst it is day; for the night of death cometh, wherein no man can work.

AND may those of us who are much about the age of our deceased friend and brother, be excited to labour to be in actual readiness for our own departure. Surely the voice of this providence is the voice of Christ to us in those words, Luke xii. 35—37. with which I conclude. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men who wait for their Lord. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.* AMEN.





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